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Clothes for Special Occasions : Extension Circular 4-21-62

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CLOTHES for

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CLOTHES for *Special Occasions*

by Gerda Petersen
Professor of Home Economics, Clothing

PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

1. Make a dress or outfit for a special occasion.
2. Make an extra garment. It may be a special slip, an accessory for your dress or some other garment that you want or need.
3. Maintain good grooming habits.
4. Be responsible for the care of your own clothes.
5. Complete your record book.

Be at your most attractive when you dress for a special occasion. Plan carefully, select pattern and fabric wisely and compliment your outfit with attractive accessories.

THE DRESS YOU PLAN TO MAKE

When planning this dress, ask yourself these questions:

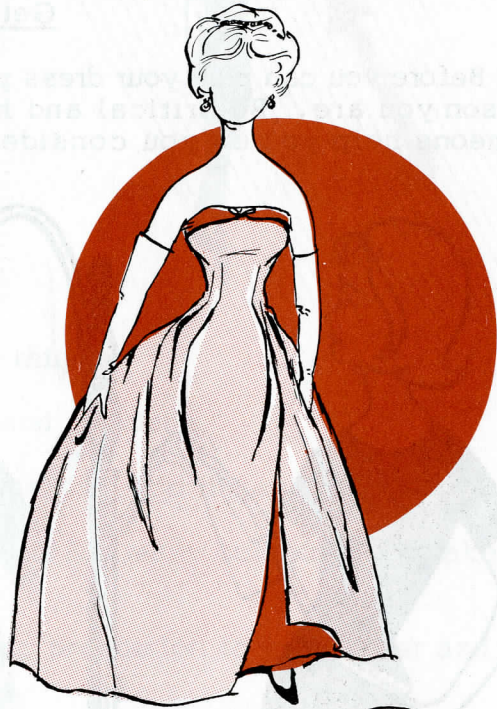
- * Will I wear it for a prom, a reception, an informal party, a church affair, a concert, a movie date, or a combination of occasions?
- * What will others be wearing for the same occasion?
- * What fashion trends will be most becoming to me?
- * How much may I spend?
- * How many seasons will I need to wear it?
- * How skillful am I at sewing? Will it be better to make a simple dress and do it well than to make a more elaborate dress poorly?

Special occasion dresses are usually dressy and elaborate. They may be soft and supple, crisp and bouffant or draped with an effect of elegant simplicity. They may be decorated with embroidery, touches of velvet, braid or ornate buttons. Fabrics may range from crisp pique to soft, luxurious velvet.



A Formal

A formal dress is worn for those very special occasions such as a prom or a wedding. Ask yourself if the dress will be suitable for college activities later; if so, it will be more useful to you. The fabric will probably be decorative and "rich". Fabrics often used for formals are: taffeta, net, chiffon, velvet, brocade and silk organza. Wear your dressiest shoes and sheerest hose. Gloves may be short or very long depending on the type of dress and community customs. Your corsage should harmonize with the colors in your dress. Flowers are worn with heads up since this is the way they grow. Your jewelry may be elegant.



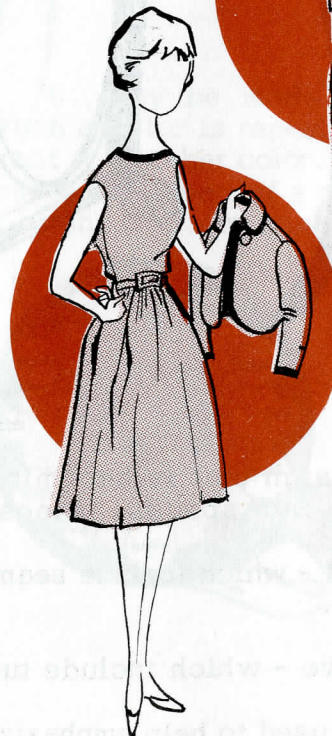
A Dress for Church

An outfit for church should give you a well dressed look but should not be conspicuous. Some informal party dresses or best school dresses are appropriate. Low cut, sleeveless dresses are not in good taste for church wear. Hats and gloves are always appropriate. Simple jewelry is in good taste. It does not attract undue attention.



The "Many Occasion" Dress

The "many occasion" dress is the most economical and may best suit your needs. The style may be more conservative. The skirt will not be the fullest. Perhaps the dress will be sleeveless and moderately low cut, with a matching jacket with sleeves to be worn when you need a covered-up look. It may be dressed up or down to suit the occasion.

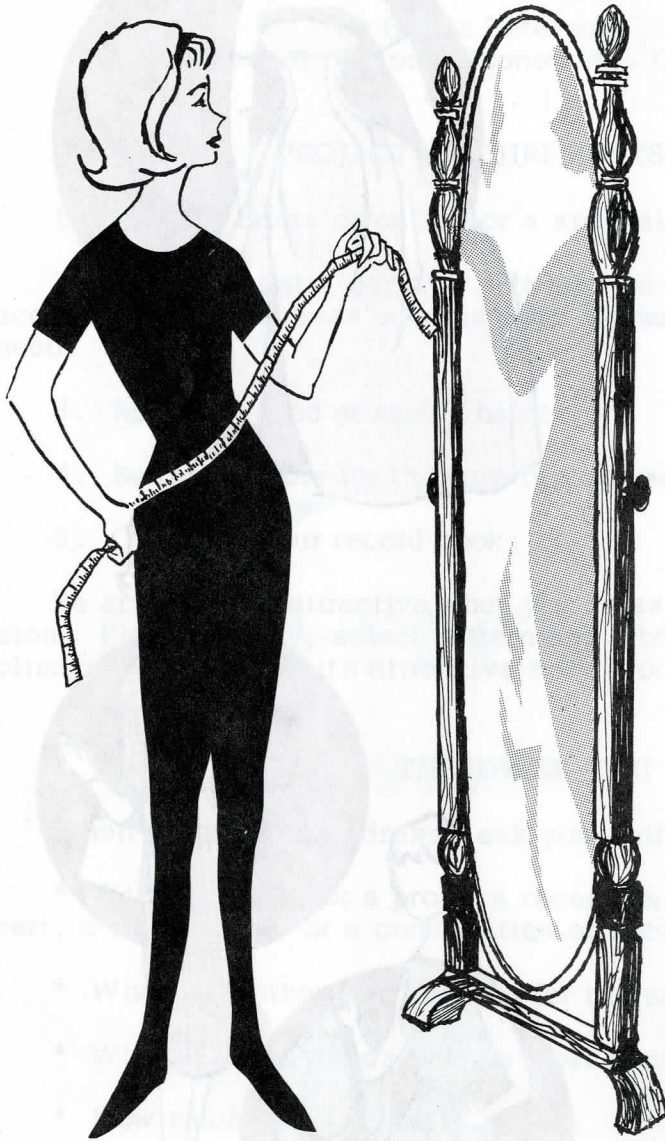


Fabrics that might be used are: voile, eyelet, cotton, satin, linen, lightweight wools, crepes and other new fabrics on the market. This outfit can be worn with or without a hat. Gloves are worn even though a hat is not worn. Shoes may have either high or low heels.

FABRIC & PATTERN PLANNED ESPECIALLY FOR YOU

Getting to Know Yourself

Before you can plan your dress you need to know how you really look and the kind of person you are. Be critical and honest as you examine yourself in a mirror. Have someone help you as you consider:



1. Your size, figure, shape and body proportions.

2. Your general health (affects your figure, skin, hair, posture and mental outlook).

3. Your coloring.

4. Your mannerisms and habits.

5. Your likes and dislikes such as:

a. Types of clothes: dainty or frilly, simple or sophisticated, casual, classic or high style.

b. Colors and textures.

c. Kinds of accessories.

Some of your likes and dislikes may need to be adjusted if you are to be your most attractive self.

6. Your individuality - that priceless possession that you have and no one else can buy.

Now you are ready to plan a personal dress design for an attractive appearance. One that will help you look the way you'd like to look, that will give you a feeling of self-respect and help you meet your special occasion with confidence that you look your best.

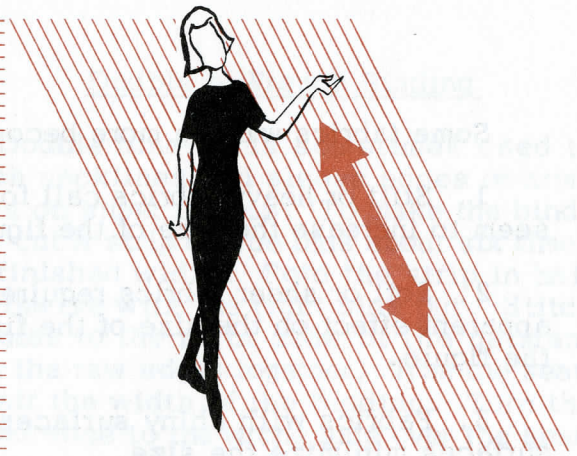
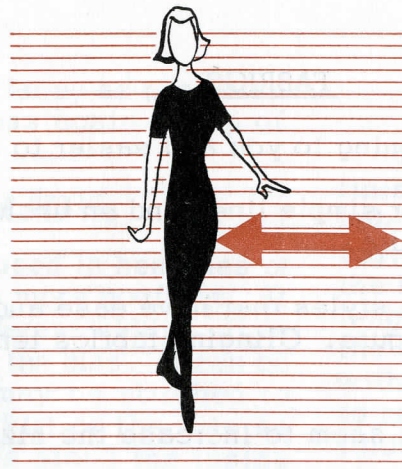
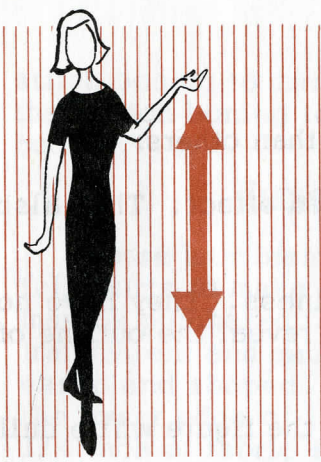
Lines & Spaces

Choose a design that is becoming to you. Every design is made up of lines that divide the whole into spaces. Lines may be:

1. Structural - which include seams and construction points necessary for holding a garment together.

2. Decorative - which include tucks, cording, braid, embroidery, etc.

Lines can be used to help emphasize your good points and minimize your less attractive ones.



1. Vertical lines can make you look taller and thinner.
2. Horizontal lines can make you look shorter and broader.
3. Diagonal lines (if more lengthwise than crosswise) add the appearance of height.
4. Curved lines suggest grace and femininity. Too many curved lines make a design look "fussy" or cluttered.

Spaces made by lines should be in a pleasing proportion to each other and to the whole design. Consider proportions such as:

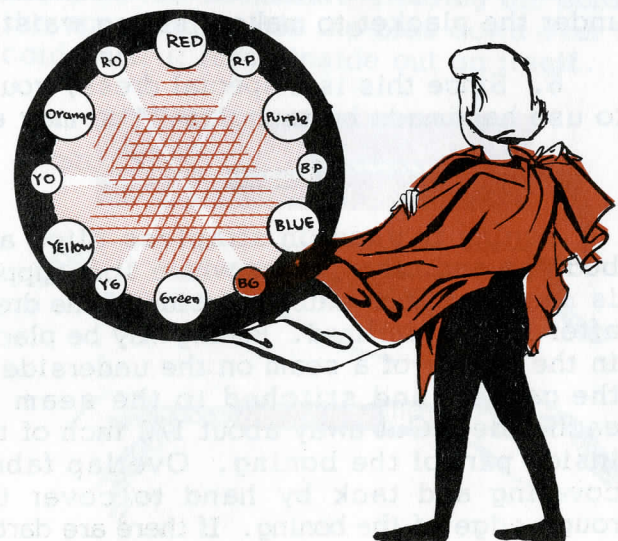
1. Length of jacket or bodice in relation to length of skirt.
2. Length of sleeve to length of arm.
3. Size of collar to size of girl and shape of face.
4. Placement of trim in relation to the part of garment involved and size of person.

Color

Colors can enhance your beauty if chosen to flatter the skin and compliment the hair and eyes. These factors may help you understand some of the effects of color. Colors:

1. Give an effect of warmth (reds and yellows) or coolness (blue and related colors).
2. Make the figure seem larger if the color is warm, light, or bright.
3. Make the figure seem smaller or more slender if the color is a cool hue, a dark value or dull in intensity.
4. Appear differently when placed next to each other.
5. May seem to change under different lights.

6. May be made to appear stronger when a color is repeated or is used in contrast to another color. Attention can be attracted to a part of a costume by the use of a bright or contrasting spot of color.



FABRICS

Some fabrics will be more becoming to you and easier to sew than others:

1. Stiff or heavy fabrics call for simple lines and an uncluttered effect. They also seem to increase the size of the figure.
2. Soft or sheer fabrics require styles that have ease and fullness. They have no apparent effect on the size of the figure. Clinging fabrics tend to reveal the outline of the figure.
3. Fabrics with shiny surfaces seem to increase the size of the figure while dull surfaces minimize the size.
4. Decorative fabrics or those with a definite design require a simple pattern with few pieces. Lack of skill in stitching shows less on these fabrics. Large sprawling design motifs seem to increase the size of the figure.
5. Slippery fabrics and loosely woven fabrics that fray easily are difficult to sew.

After considering these points choose a fabric and pattern that are suitable to each other, becoming to you and appropriate for the occasion.

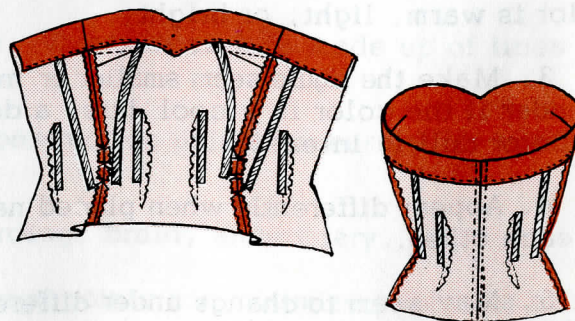
CONSTRUCTION PROCESSES FOR DRESS-UP CLOTHES

General Suggestions

1. Instructions on your pattern guide will be helpful when sewing your dress. Your construction book will give you additional help.
2. To test machine stitching use a 10 inch double strip of fabric cut on the length-wise grain. If the stitch causes fabric to pucker or is not balanced, adjust machine tension, pressure and length of stitch until you have an attractive stitch.
3. Fine fabrics require fine needles.
4. It is often necessary to line a dress-up dress or make a special slip for it. A slip may be cut from the same bodice and skirt pattern as the dress if no slip pattern is included in your pattern envelop.
5. The waistline of a dress may be held firmly in place if a narrow grosgrain ribbon or seam tape is stitched to the seam allowance. The ends of the ribbon may be hooked under the placket to make a strong waistline.
6. Since this is a special dress, you may want to do more handwork. You may want to use handmade buttonholes. You may even want to sew your zipper by hand.

Boning

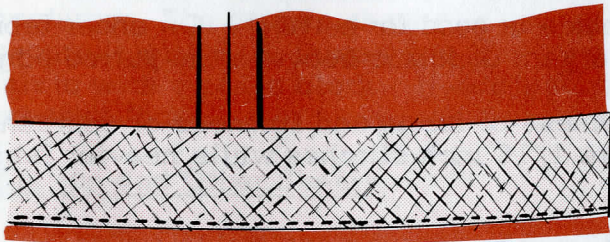
Boning is used on strapless slips and bodices and other places where stiff support is needed. It is stitched inside of the dress after it is underlined. Boning may be placed in the center of a seam on the underside of the garment and stitched to the seam on each side. Cut away about 1/2 inch of the inside part of the boning. Overlap fabric covering and tack by hand to cover the rough edge of the boning. If there are darts,



stitch boning to darts as far up as possible, then catch boning to dress again at top of bodice.

Horse Hair Braid

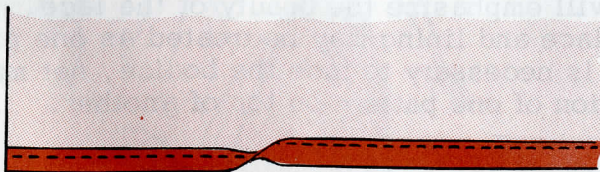
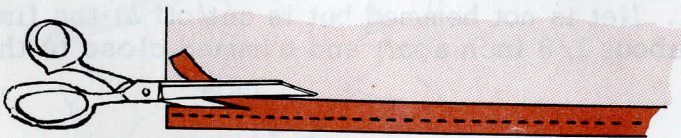
Horse hair braid is used in hemlines of full skirts to make them more bouffant. It may be purchased in different widths. It is transparent and made on the bias. It can be eased and shaped. It may be stitched to the lower edge of the skirt or the slip so 1/4 inch of fabric shows along the inside edge of the hem. Slip stitch horse hair braid in place at the top.



Rolling a Hem

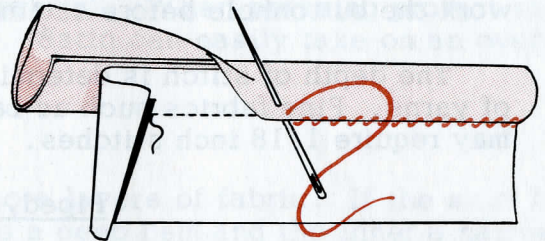
A rolled or tiny hem is often used on sheer fabrics. Turn the edge of the skirt a little below the hem line and sew along the edge by machine. Trim away the raw edge close to the stitching. Finish by one of the methods given below:

1. Turn the raw edge of the stitching against the wrong side and stitch again on the first stitching and close to the edge.
2. Roll to the wrong side and slipstitch in place by hand.



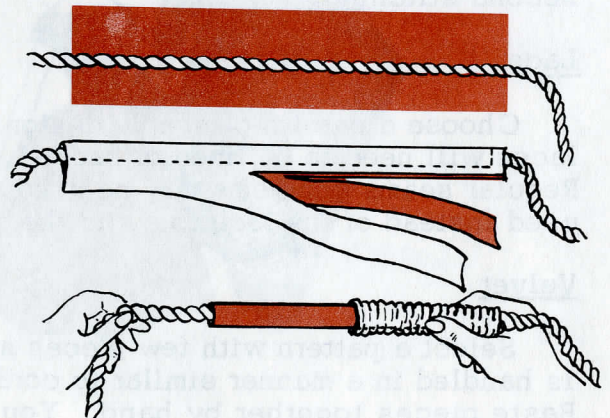
Double or French Binding

Double binding is sometimes used to finish necklines and sleeve edges or armholes on sheer fabrics. To make the binding, cut a strip of true bias about six times the finished width. Fold the strip in half lengthwise with the right side out. Stitch the bias to the right side of the garment with the raw edges together. Trim the seam to half the width of the binding. Turn the folded edge to the wrong side over the seam allowance and handstitch in place, catching stitches in the original machine stitching.



Bias Tubing

Bias tubing may be used for button loops, belts and other decorative trim. The thickness of the tubing will vary with the weight of fabric and effect desired. Cable cord is usually used inside the tubing to make it firm and round. To make bias tubing, cut a strip of bias the desired length and wide enough to easily cover the cord. Fold the bias (wrong side out) over the cord and stitch with a machine cording foot. Stretch bias slightly as you stitch. Sew bias to the cord at the end. Trim away some of the seam allowance. If you want the tubing to be soft, cut away seam allowance close to the seamline. Holding the cord at the open end, slide the bias down over the cord until it turns inside out on itself.



Thread Loops

Thread loops are sometimes used for buttonholes placed on a fold or made for tiny buttons. They may be made by crocheting or by placing several strands of thread in the form of a loop and covering with buttonhole stitch. Use silk thread size A or buttonhole twist size D. Belt carriers may be made in a similar way.

Worked Buttonholes

On some special fabrics or designs worked buttonholes are nice. The buttonhole should be made through two layers of fabric for strength. On loosely woven fabrics use a thin but firm interfacing. Make the buttonhole line as long as the diameter of the button plus its thickness. Machine stitch (about 20 stitches per inch) $\frac{1}{16}$ inch on each side of the buttonhole line.

Cut exactly on the fabric thread (a razor blade is good for cutting). On sheer fabrics work the buttonhole before cutting, leaving a yarn of fabric between the purled edges.

The depth of stitch is determined by thickness of fabric and firmness or coarseness of yarns. Fine fabrics such as batiste require $\frac{1}{16}$ inch stitches while heavier fabrics may require $\frac{1}{18}$ inch stitches.

Piped, Bound or Corded Buttonholes

These buttonholes can give a professional look to your garment. Your pattern guide or construction book will give you directions for making a buttonhole that is suitable for your style of dress. Be sure to make a sample before you work on your garment. Some fabrics will need reinforcing with some type of lining fabric such as batiste or net.

Hand Sewed Plackets

Hand stitching gives more satisfactory plackets on some pattern styles and on some fabrics, such as velvets and crepes. Use the method suggested in your zipper guide but substitute tiny prick stitches or back stitches for the machine stitching. Stitch close together from the bottom toward the top.

Tips on Sewing Special Fabrics

Net

Three or four layers of net are required to make a skirt sheer and wafty with no suggestion of a slip showing through. A slip of crisp taffeta could be faced with horsehair so it billows at the hem without being stiff. Net is not hemmed but is cut off at the finished length. Seams are double stitched about $\frac{1}{8}$ inch apart and trimmed close to the second stitching.

Lace

Choose a pattern of simple design that will emphasize the beauty of the lace. Most laces will need to be lined or backed. The lace and lining may be treated as one piece. Regular seams and hems may be used. If it is necessary to face the bodice, net may be used instead of the lace to avoid the confusion of one pattern on top of another.

Velvet

Select a pattern with few pieces since velvet is an elegant fabric. It has a nap and is handled in a manner similar to corduroy with all pattern pieces laid in one direction. Baste pieces together by hand. You may need to use a looser machine tension and a

longer stitch. Use light pressure on the presser foot to prevent marking the fabric and shifting the two pieces as you stitch. Stitch in the direction with the nap. Check fit carefully before doing your permanent stitching because ripping and restitching may mar the fabric.

Seams may be pinked, overcast or bound with chiffon, net or rayon seam binding. Seam binding may also be used on the hem. Press lightly with steam. Needle boards may be used for pressing to keep the pile from becoming crushed. If you don't have a needle board, terry cloth or another piece of velvet are possible substitutes. The velvet is laid face down on these as you press. Brush lightly after pressing to raise the nap.

Satin

Satin has a sheen that reflects light in different ways when it is placed in more than one direction. Therefore, all the pattern pieces are laid in the same direction as for corduroy. The pattern should be pinned securely because the fabric is slippery. Baste securely with silk thread (won't leave marks on fabric). When pressing protect the fabric with a press cloth. Use moisture sparingly. Satin can easily take on an overpressed look.

Chiffon and Other Sheers

Chiffon skirts are usually made with two or more layers of fabric. If the skirt is made of straight lengths the outer skirt usually has a deep hem and the inner a narrow hem. If a circular skirt is used it should be allowed to hang for 24 hours or more to stretch before it is made even around the bottom. A narrow hem is used on this type of skirt. Both bodice and skirt may need to be lined. Fine French seams may be used on the bodice. Narrow double stitched seams that have been overcast by hand or machine may be used on armholes. Use the most inconspicuous kind of seam for the skirt.

If the bodice isn't completely lined it will be better to bind the neckline and armholes than to face, since facings will show through the fabric. Double bindings and hand rolled hems are nice finishes for chiffons.

Chiffon is very sheer and has a tendency to slip. It may be necessary to lay out chiffon on tissue paper and pin it on selvages and ends to keep the fabric grain straight. Tissue and fabric may be handled together when pinning, cutting and sewing. Pin closely to prevent the two pieces of fabric from slipping. Use a fine needle, a fine thread and a short stitch.



The Well Fitted Dress

A dress may be perfect in line and beautifully cut but it must fit correctly to do justice to the design. Is your dress one that:

1. Has a fashionable fit? The amount of ease and control of fullness changes from year to year according to fashion trends. Observe these trends in magazines and ready-to-wear shops and adapt them to your dress pattern.
2. Has been fitted over foundation and other undergarments so these add, rather than detract from its general appearance?
3. Conforms to your figure, has enough ease for movement and shows no strain in any part?
4. Has no wrinkles that indicate it is too long, too short, too narrow or off-grain?
5. Is a length that is fashionable and yet the most becoming length for you?



ACCESSORIES

Simplicity and suitability are the essence of good taste in accessories. Accessories can add a fashionable touch. Beware of wearing those that are too conspicuous or overly decorative.

Accessories should harmonize with each other and with the dress in color, texture and idea (suited for the occasion).

Ask yourself if you will need to wear these accessories with other outfits. If so, consider whether the accessories are suitable and if they will harmonize with the other outfits. They should be in scale with your size. For example: a petite girl will wear a smaller hat and carry a smaller purse than a tall, slender girl.

All accessories should be becoming to you. They can add a note of emphasis and help to bring out your good points.

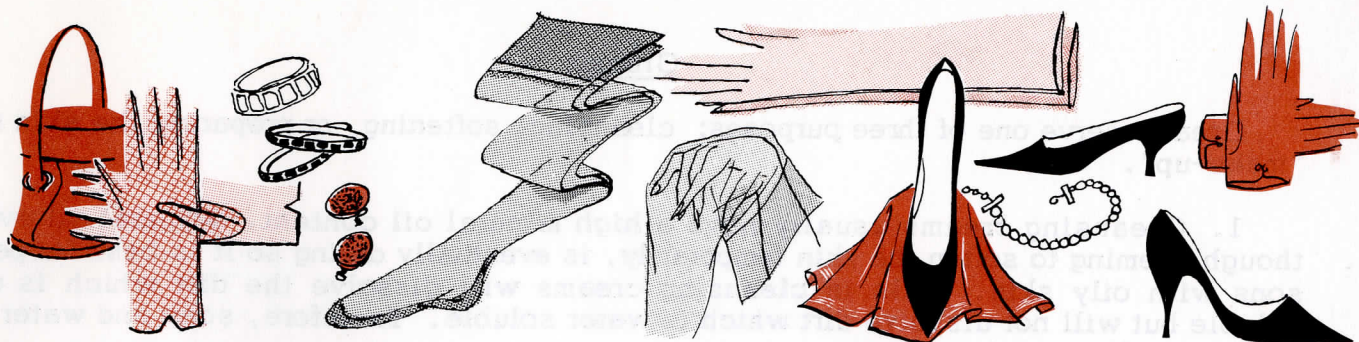
Hats

Girls of your age will often be well-dressed without a hat. On some occasions and with certain costumes a hat is necessary to be appropriately dressed. Hats are always appropriate for church, street and travel in public conveyances. They may be worn for teas and dining in restaurants. The shape of your face and your hair style will affect the becomingness of your hat. Try your hat with the dress to get the effect of the whole costume.

Purses or Bags

Purses or bags for afternoon and evening occasions are usually smaller in size. They may be made of fabric. They should harmonize with the rest of the costume.





Gloves

Gloves are chosen with the costume in mind. The length of glove, kind of fabric, color and style are dependent on it. Gloves may match the dress in color or harmonize with the hat. White or beige gloves, immaculately clean, add a well groomed look to an outfit if they are not too apparent. Shortie gloves are worn with short sleeves for many occasions. Gloves that extend above the elbow indicate a formal occasion.

Shoes

Dressy sandals and pumps may be worn for a special occasion. They may have heels of varying height, depending on the present fashion. If you are wearing high heels for the first time practice walking on them at home until you can do so gracefully. Doctors advise wearing high heels no more than four hours at a time.

Hose

Hose are generally labeled according to the occasion for which they are to be worn,

such as "Daytime sheer" and "Evening sheer." The foot of the hose is sized in relation to your shoe size. To get your correct length measure straight up from the heel to the button on the garter of your foundation garment. However, if your leg is full you may need extra length. Denier in hose refers to the weight and thickness of the thread. The denier numbers may vary from 7 to 80. A low denier number means a thinner yarn and a sheerer stocking. Gauge tells you how close and fine the stitches are in 1 1/2 inch of a full-fashioned stocking. A high gauge number means the stocking has greater strength, added stretch, and less chance of snagging. Needle count in seamless hose is similar to gauge in the full-fashioned. Seamless are good for slender legs and eliminate the problem of keeping seams straight.

Jewelry

A piece of jewelry can often add just the right touch. Unless you have a special flair for wearing jewelry, use it sparingly. Use similar types of jewelry together, as gold bracelets with gold necklace or earrings.

GROOMING

The basis for an attractive appearance is good health and cleanliness. Your figure, your posture, the condition of your skin and hair are indications of the condition of your general health. Your family doctor can give you advice for improving along these lines. Cleanliness is available to all who will work for it.

Hair that is becomingly styled can increase the beauty of your face. A skilled beautician can style it for you. She will consider many things, such as the shape of your face, your hair texture, your hairline and the tapering of your neck. After it has been styled, you can easily learn to care for it yourself.

Cosmetics can be used sparingly by girls of your age since you have naturally soft, lovely skins. Some cosmetics carefully chosen and skillfully applied may enhance your natural beauty. A discussion of some of the more common types follows:

Creams

Creams serve one of three purposes: cleansing, softening, or preparing the skin for "make-up".

1. Cleansing creams usually have a high mineral oil content. Mineral oil even though seeming to soften the skin temporarily, is eventually drying so it is best for persons with oily skin. Oils in cleansing creams will dissolve the dirt which is oil soluble but will not dissolve dirt which is water soluble. Therefore, soap and water is the most effective cleanser.

2. Softening or lubricating creams soften the skin by replacing some of the natural skin oil. Lanolin is the usual ingredient. It may be blended with other fats for easier spreading.

3. Foundation creams or powder bases are used as a finish for the skin before applying "make-up". They serve as a protection against sun and wind, give a smoother texture and if tinted add color to the skin. Choose a tint that will give the skin a clear, healthy look.

Astringents

Astringents are advertised to stimulate circulation and reduce large pores. They may be bought in cream or lotion form and contain substances, usually alcohol or witch hazel, that have a temporary astringent effect. They are most effective on oily skins.

Powders

Powders should enhance the natural skin coloring, give a smooth texture and prevent the skin from appearing shiny. Select a color that blends with the natural tones of the skin. It should not be too light or too dark, too yellow or too pink for your skin.

Perfume and Cologne

Cologne is a lighter version of perfume. The fragrance is the final dash of glamour. It should suit your personality and be used discreetly. Too much is overwhelming and is bad taste. "Try on" perfumes before you buy. You can do this by stroking the perfume tester on your inner wrist.

LOOK YOUR BEST

The occasion is a special one. Look your best. Your best is many things:

- * It's being your best personal self.
- * It's planning the combination of design, color, texture.
- * It's sewing and fitting with skill.
- * It's selecting accessories with taste.
- * It's wearing the outfit with pride.